(viii) Identification of ecologically sensitive areas to ensure that such areas are totally excluded from any kind of exploitation. The minimum extent of such areas to be 10% of the total forest areas of the state.

(ix) States to ensure that sufficient budgetary provisions are made for the preservation of biodiversity and protection of wildlife.

Under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, Arunachal Pradesh Forest Protection Authority and Nagaland Forest Protection and Development Authority were notified. North East Cell has been created in the Ministry to deal expeditiously with all matters pertaining to North East States.

Action against industries polluting Ganga

438. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state the action taken against defaulting polluting industries for polluting the river Ganga?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): Under the Ganga Action Plan Phase-I, 68 grossly polluting industries were identified in UP, Bihar and West Bengal in 1985. These industries were directed to install effluent treatment plants. Out of these 68 industries, presently 24 units are closed, 41 units are complying with operating effluent treatment plants and 3 units are defaulting and facing legal action. Subsequently, in 1997, 119 additional grossly polluting industries were identified in these three States. Out of these, 50 units are already complying with effluent treatment plants 8 units are closed and legal action has been taken against the remaining 61 defaulting units which are in UP. Directions have also been issued by the UP State Pollution Control Board to these defaulting units for installation and proper operation of effluent treatment plants.

Projects pending for environmental clearance

439. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of projects pending for environmental clearance as on 31st October, 1999 and since when these are pending, State-wise;

(b) whether Government have launched a web-site to provide latest information regarding clearance status of all the environmental and forestry project applications; if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, have worked out any procedure for allocation of more funds for environmental projects; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) 97 projects were pending for environmental clearance as on 31st October, 99. An annexure indicating details is appended. [Appendix 188, Annexure No. 10]

(b) Yes, Sir. The **WEB-SITE** address is **http://envfor.nic.in/**

The Web-site provides following details:

*** Environment**

* List of Pending Projects (every fortnight)
* Clearance letter issued in previous three months
* Projects closed during the fortnight
* Expert Committee Meeting schedules and composition of Expert Committees

*** Forest**

* Projects pending with the Central Government/State Government (every fortnight)
* Decided (approved/rejected/closed) projects
* Procedure for applying for forest clearance (including application form and guidelines)
* Advisory Committee Meeting schedules and composition of Advisory Committee

(c) The Government has constituted a Study Group, which inter alia includes a representative of the Reserve Bank of India for providing direction and impetus to the funding of projects for protection and improvement of the environment. It will consider ways and means for financing environmentally sound technologies, pollution control systems, afforestation and wasteland development.

Timber Smuggling along Assam-Nagaland Border

440. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether timber smuggling from the dense forests along the Assam-Nagaland border has been growing;

(b) whether trees on the national highways in the Region have also been cut down, resulting in large-scale soil erosion; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken to arrest these activities?